

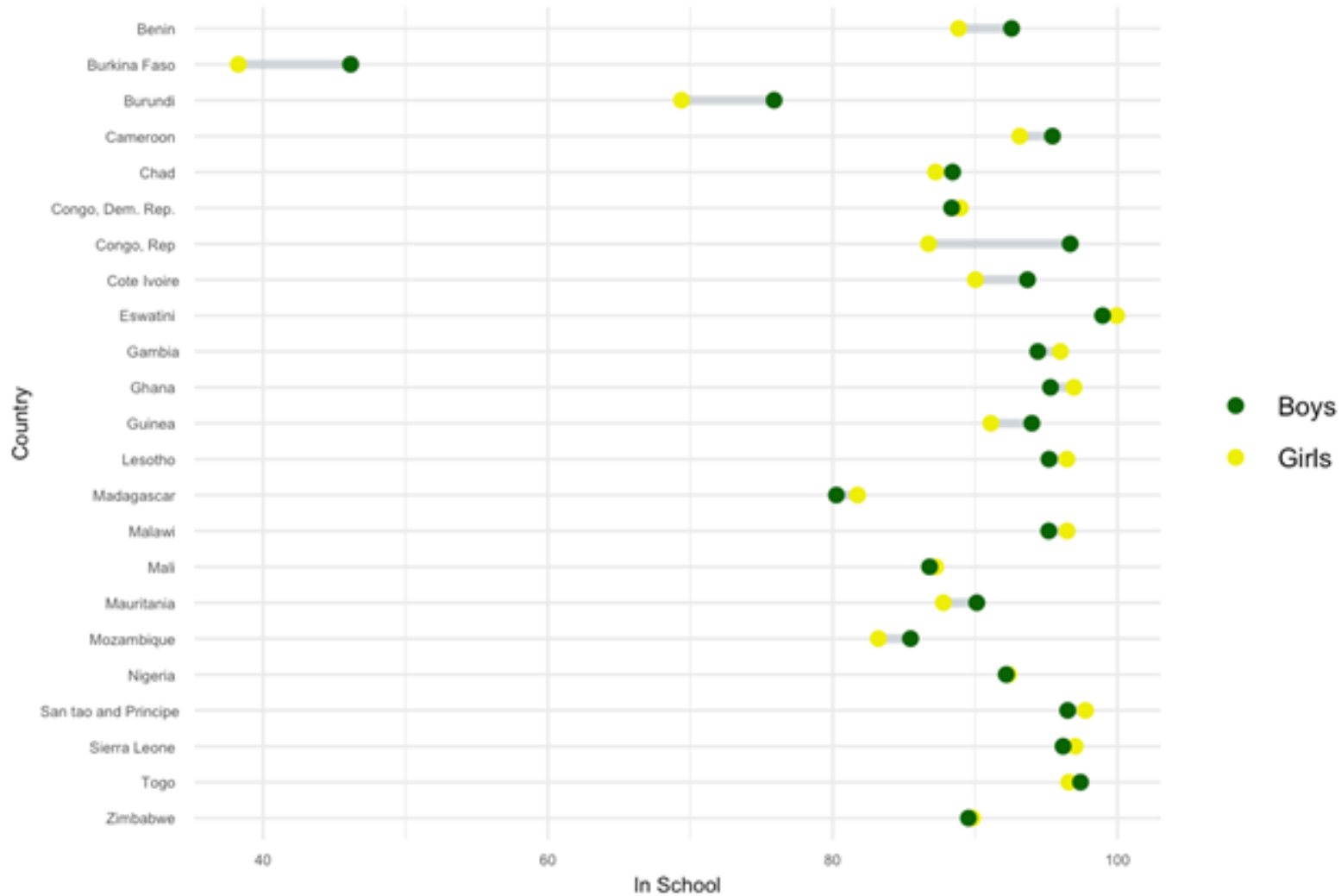
What do we know about adolescent girls' experiences in Africa?

Kehinde Ajayi and Vrinda Sharma

April 24, 2024

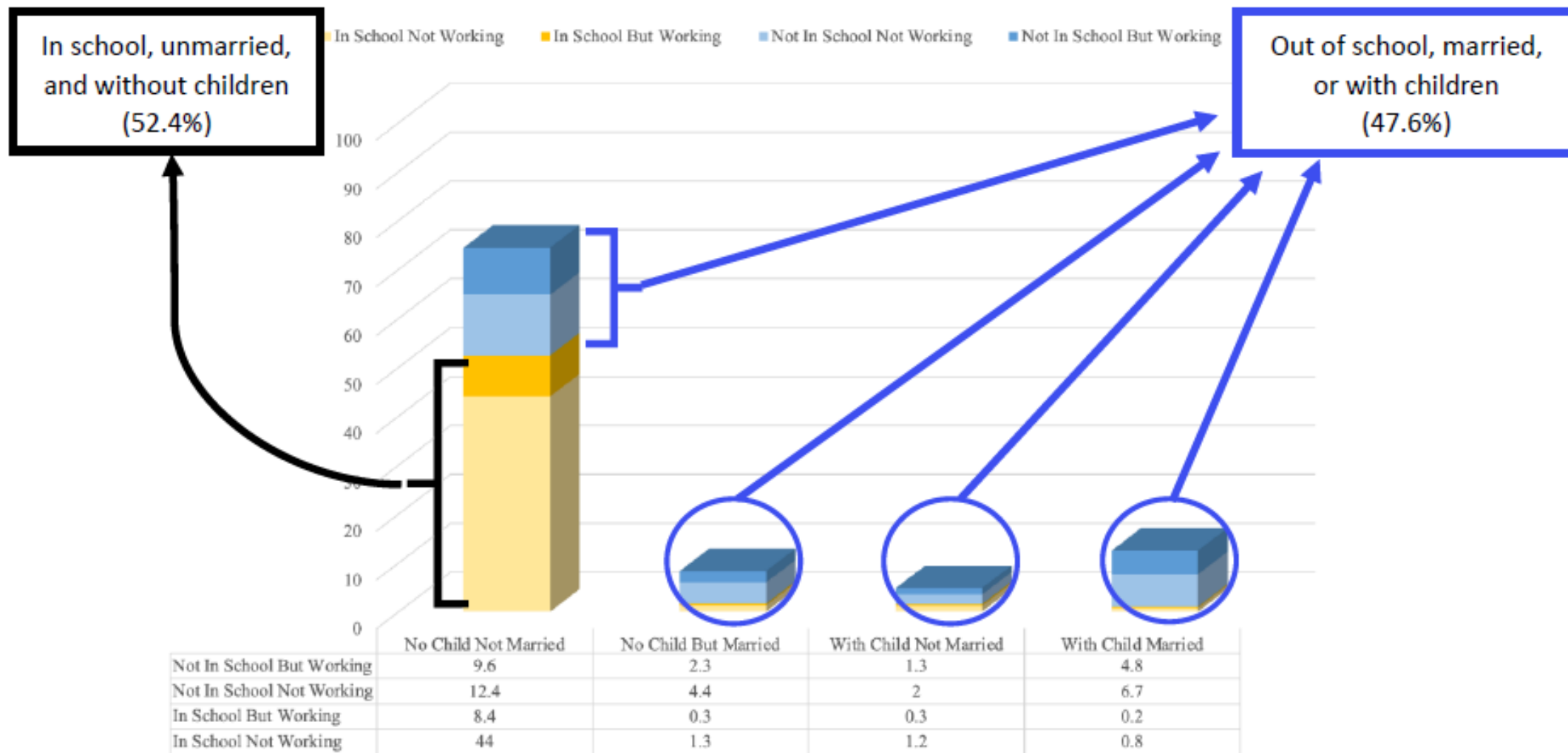


Schooling rates for 10-14-year-old girls have surpassed 80 percent in most African countries.



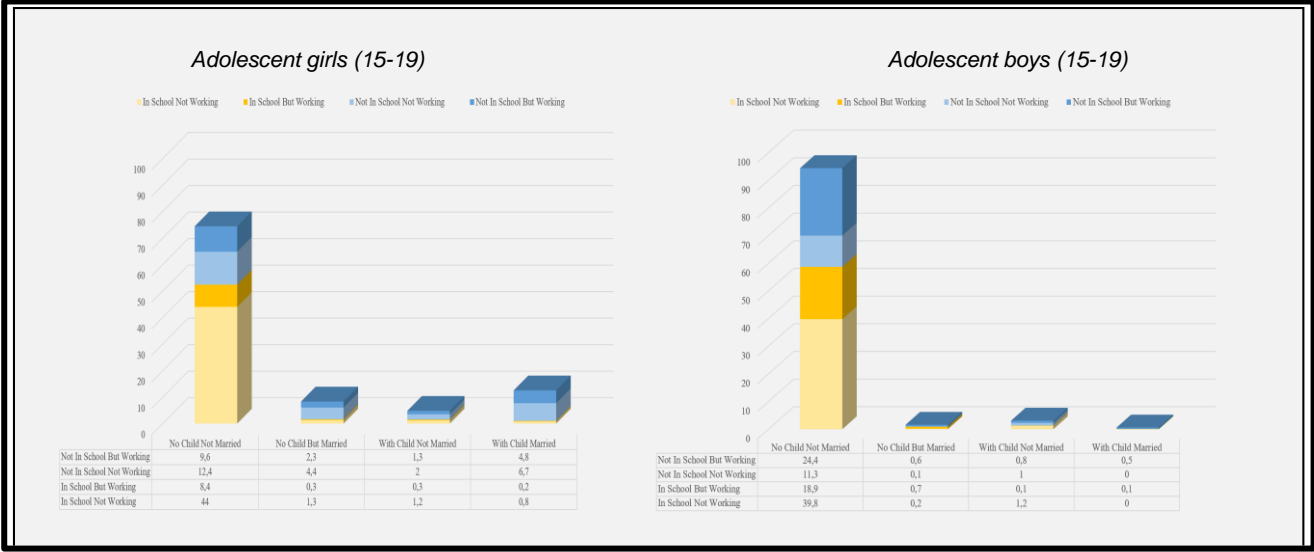
Source: Authors' construction based on data from the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

Yet, almost half of 15-19-year-old girls in Africa are out of school, married, or have children.

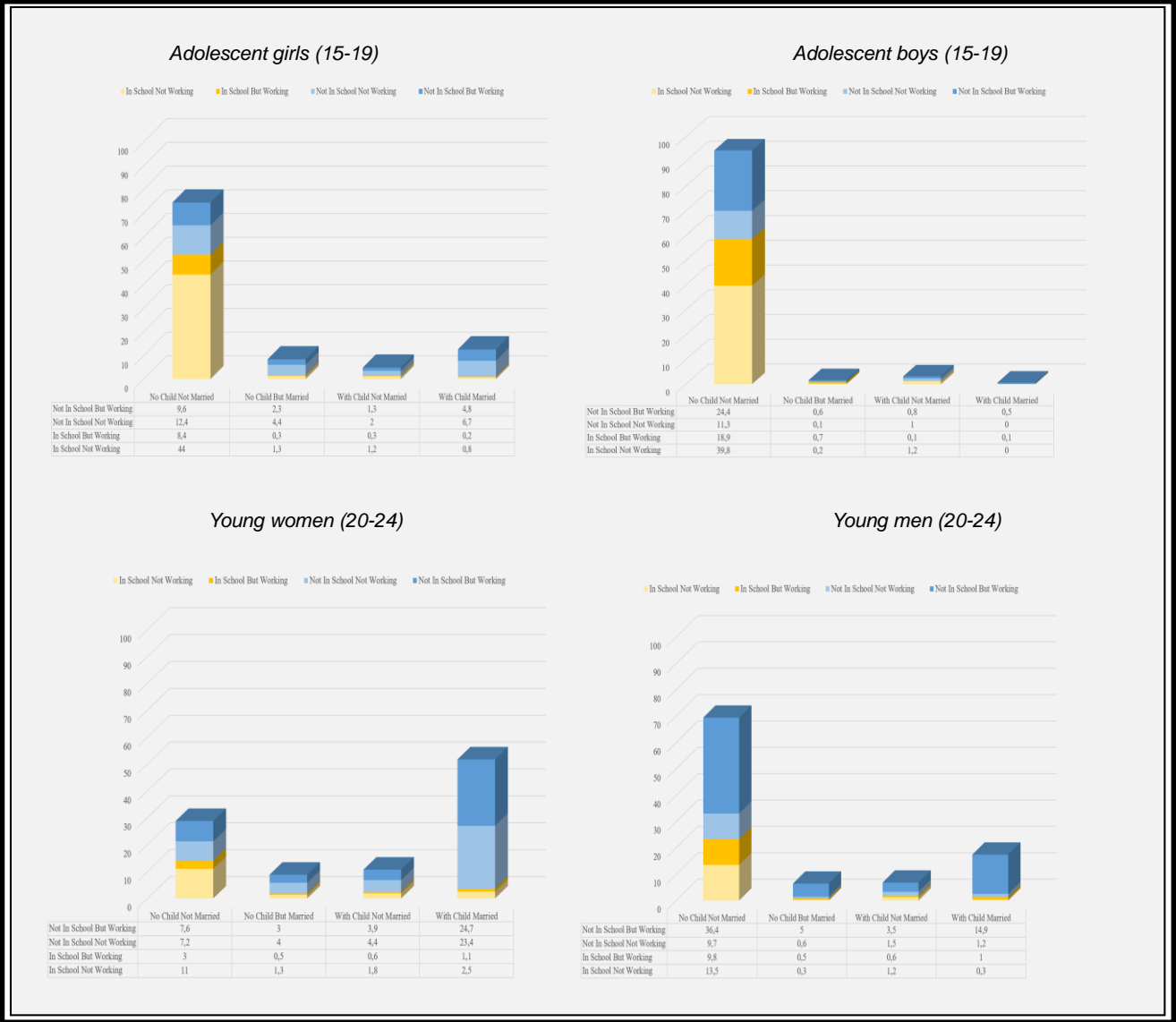


Source: Authors' construction based on data from the latest Demographic and Health Surveys.

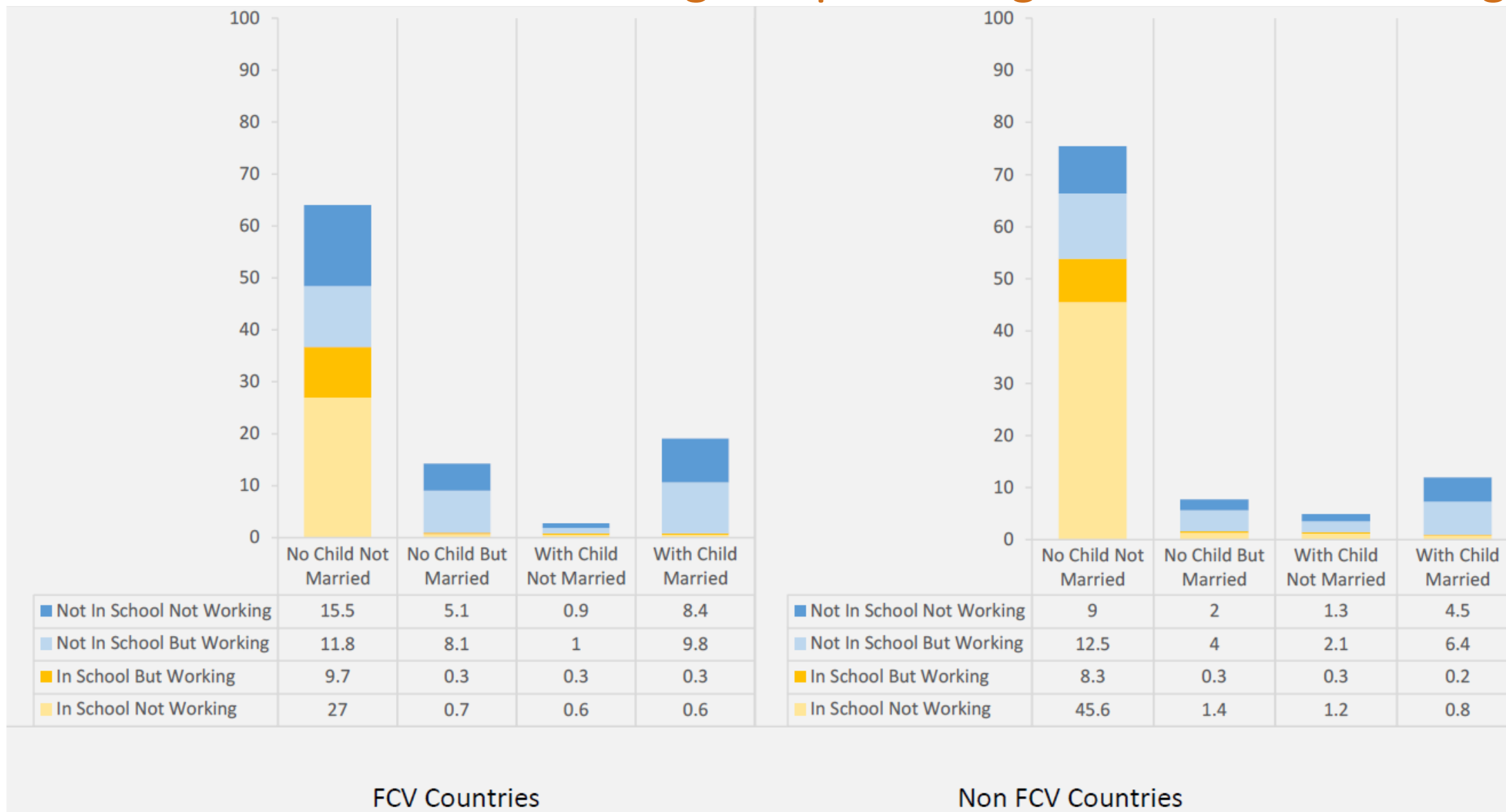
Girls face a starker transition from adolescence to adulthood than boys do.



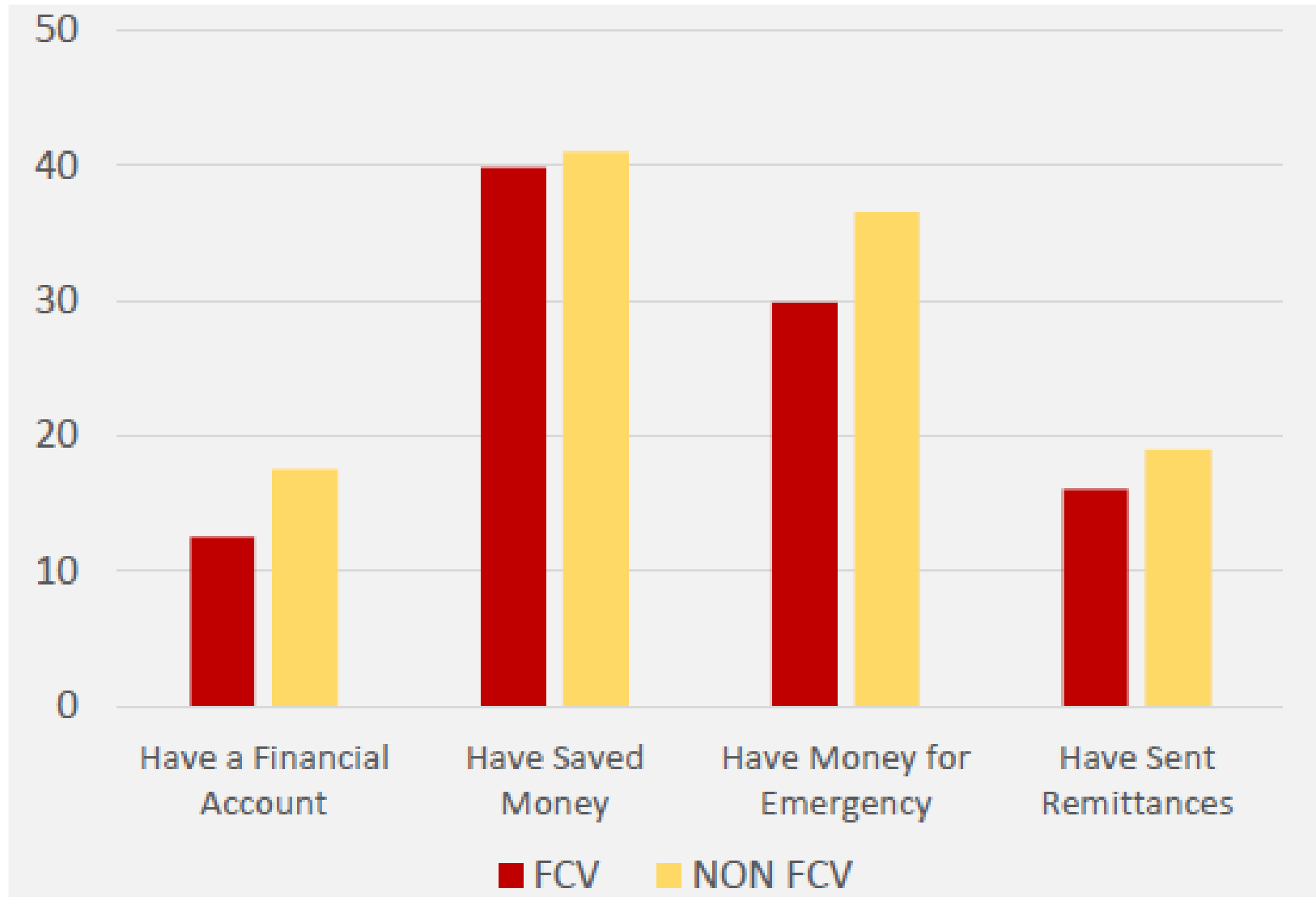
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Adolescent girls in FCV settings are more likely to be married, have children, and out of school not working compared to girls in non-FCV settings.

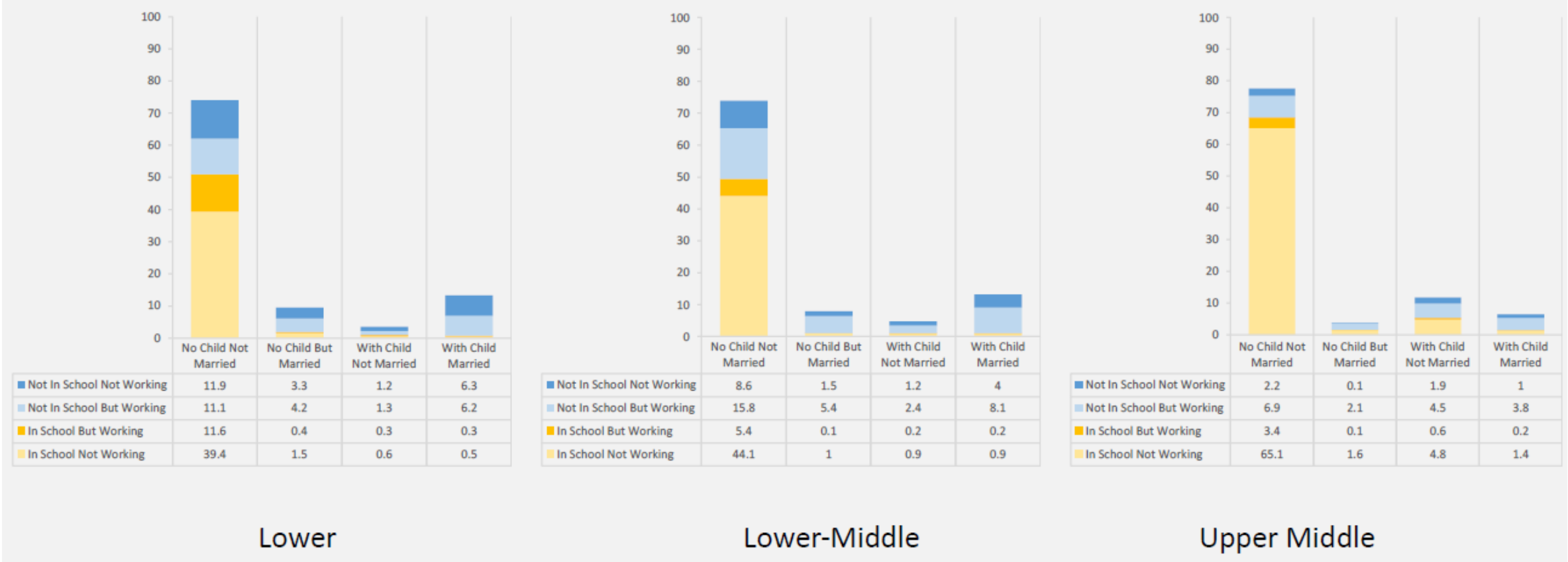


... they are also less likely to have a financial account or money for an emergency

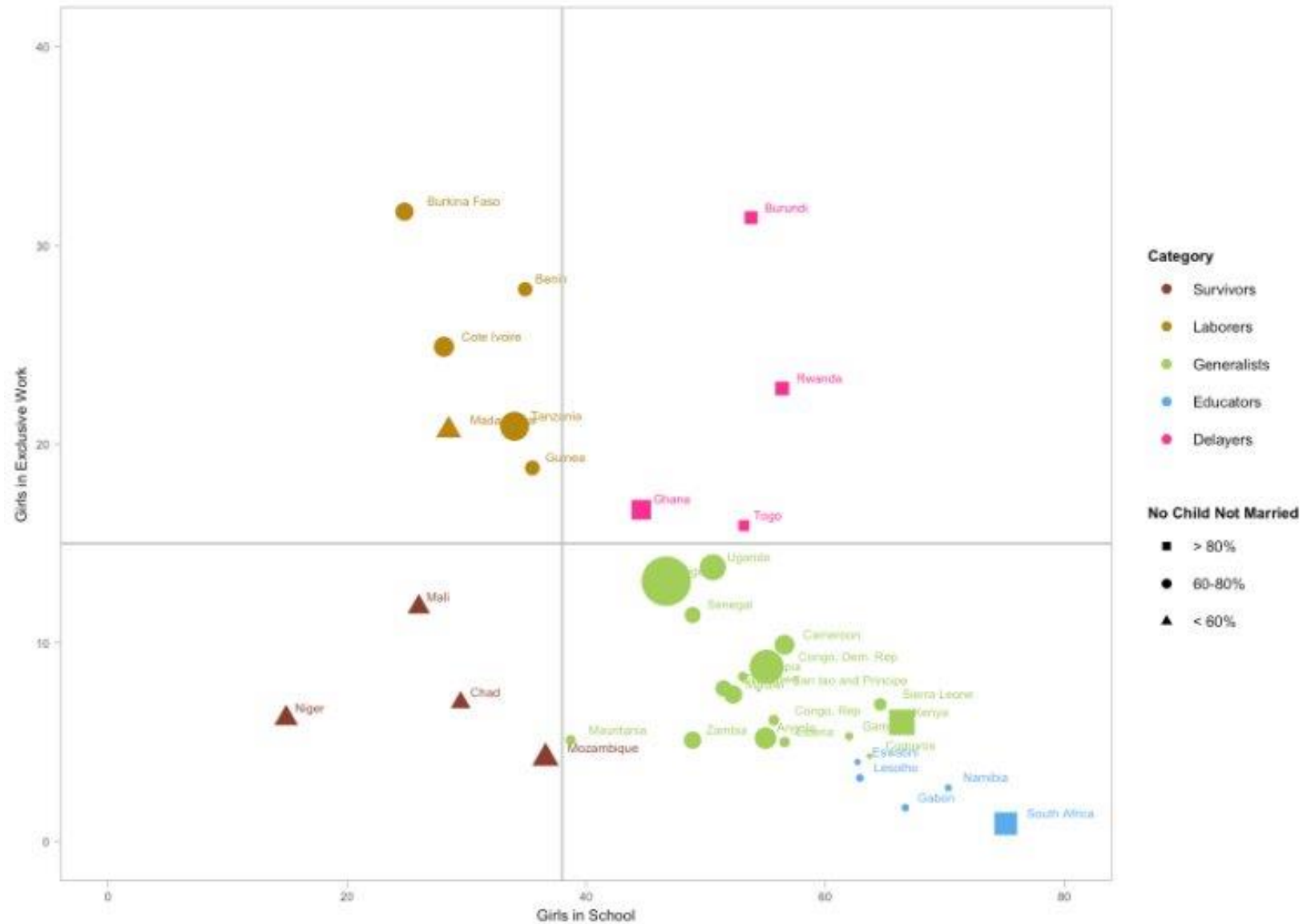


Source: Authors' construction based on data from the 2017 Global Financial Inclusion Index.

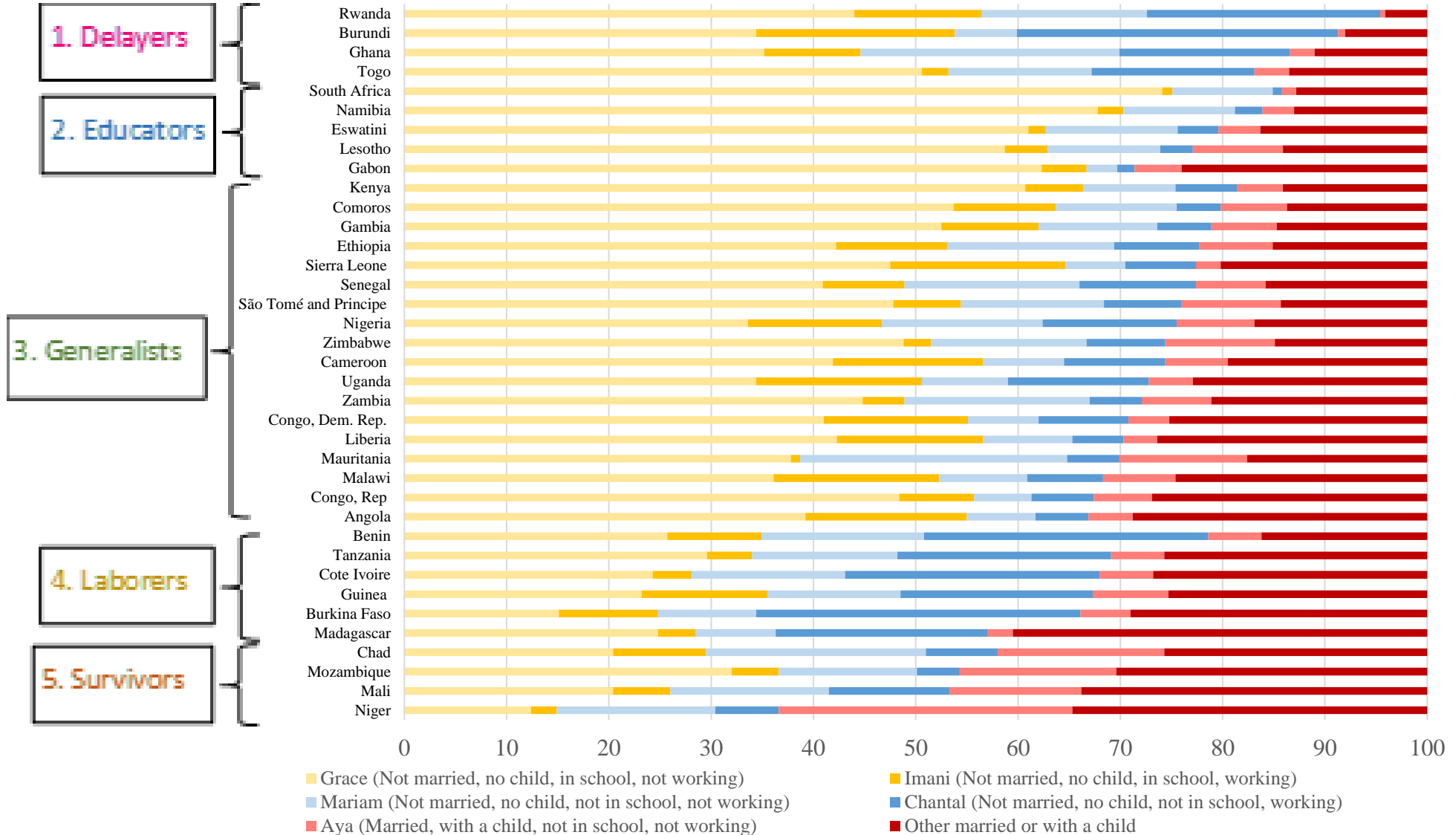
Country income classifications also correlate with adolescent girls' experiences



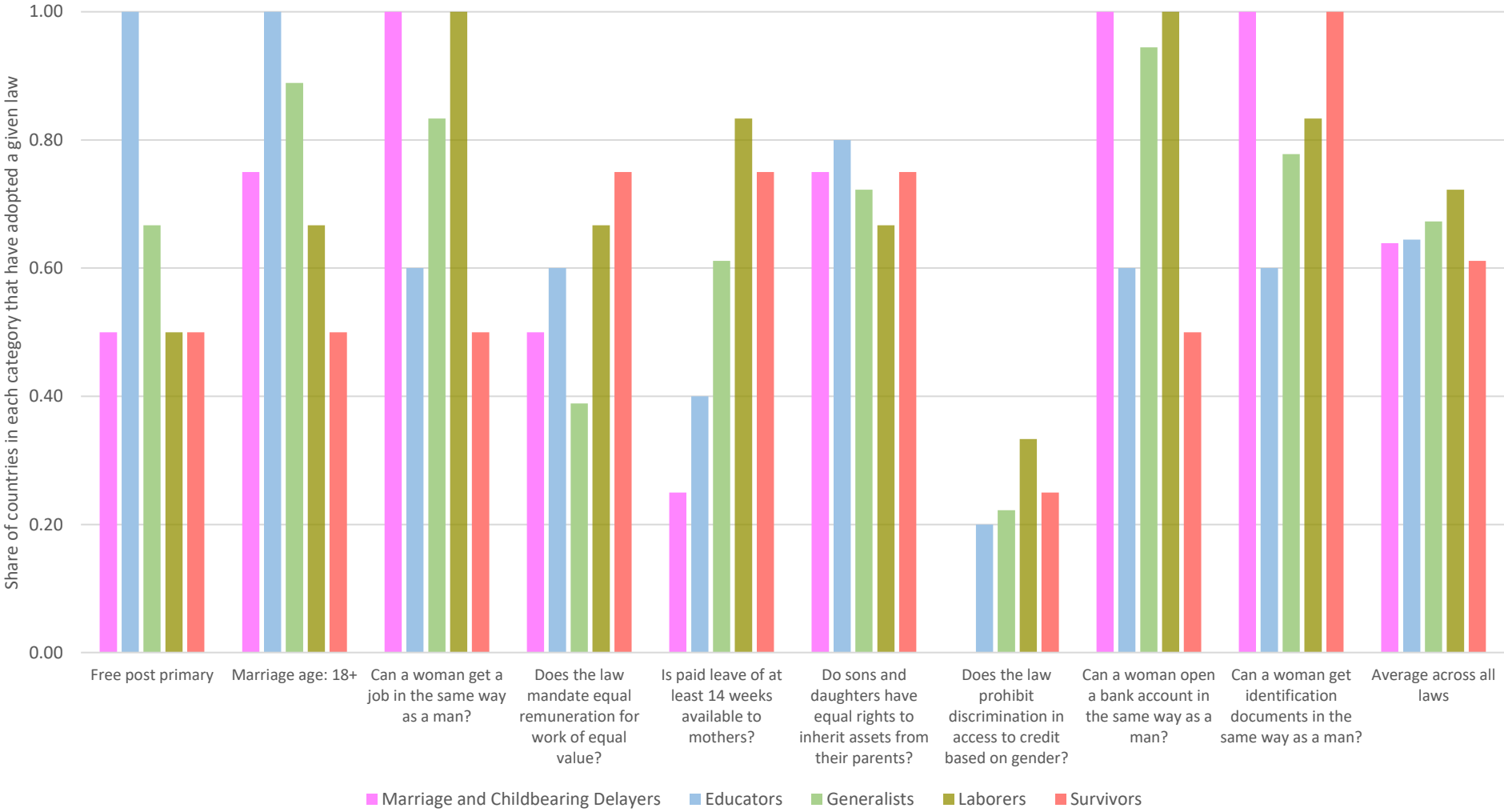
Five country categories to guide investments to enhance adolescent girls' empowerment



Stylized profiles of adolescent girls vary across country categories



Cross-country differences in adolescent girls' experiences correlate with legal environments.



Source: Women Business and the Law (2023) and authors' construction based on publicly available government sources.

Cross-country differences in adolescent girls' experiences correlate with legal environments.

Category	Key characteristics	Relevant laws
Marriage & Childbearing Delayers	The most successful at delaying marriage and childbearing for adolescent girls. Relatively high levels of schooling and work.	All have laws that a woman can get job, open a bank account, and get identification documents in the same way as a man.
Educators	Highest levels of school enrollment, yet relatively low levels of employment, even for girls who are out of school. All upper-middle income countries.	All have laws promoting education (free post-primary schooling and marriage age above 18).
Generalists	Moderate levels on all fronts – marriage and fertility delay, schooling, and work.	Not leaders in any domain of gender legal reforms.
Laborers	Highest levels of work, with relatively low levels of schooling and moderate rates of marriage and childbearing	More likely to have employment-related laws (ensuring women can get a job the same way as a man, equal work pay for equal work, 14 weeks of paid leave for mothers) and laws prohibiting gender discrimination in credit access.
Survivors	Highest levels of vulnerability. All low-income countries classified as fragility, conflict, or violence settings by the World Bank, with the highest rates of marriage and childbearing, lowest levels of schooling, and a high share of adolescents who are not in work or schooling.	All have laws dictating that women and men can access national ID documents in the same way, presenting a foundation for access to social services.

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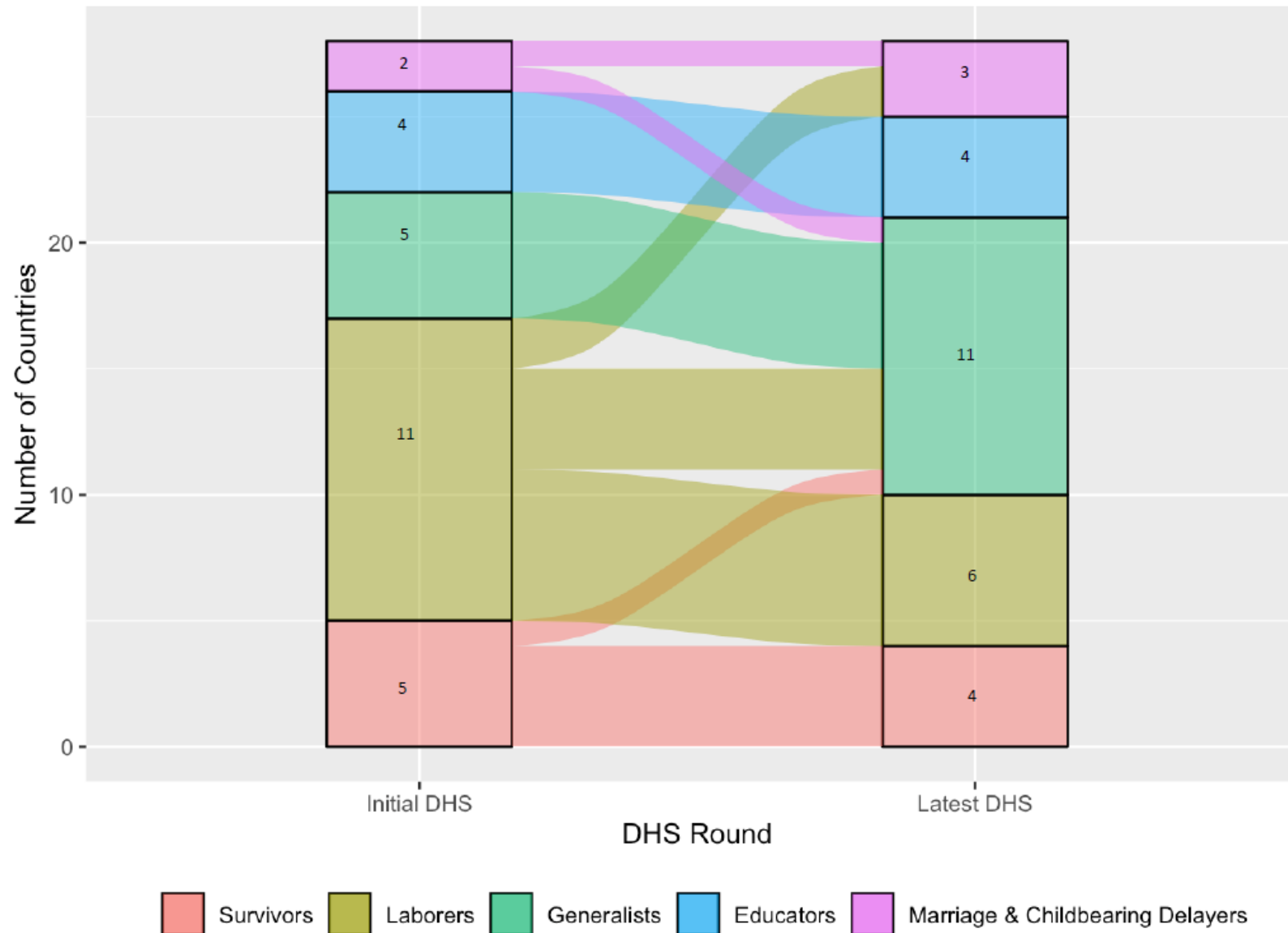
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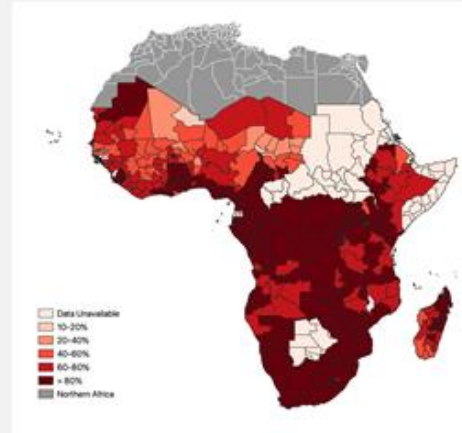
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Several countries have transitioned between categories over time.

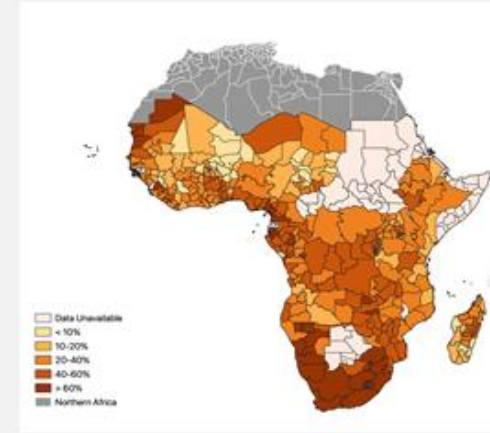


Some countries have subregions with different adolescent girls' experiences

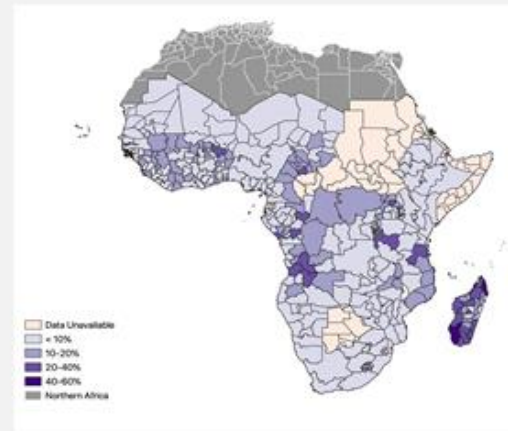
a. *Schooling for girls aged 10 to 14*



b. *Girls aged 15 to 19
(in school and not working)*

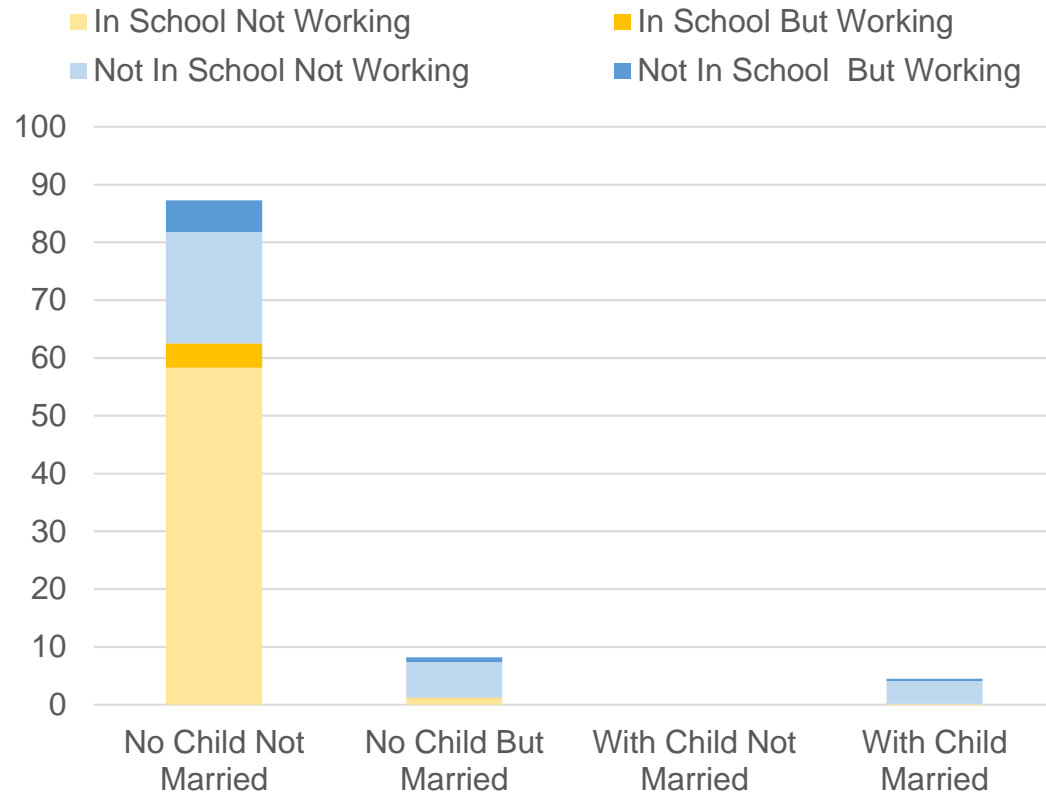


c. *Girls aged 15 to 19
(not in school and not working)*



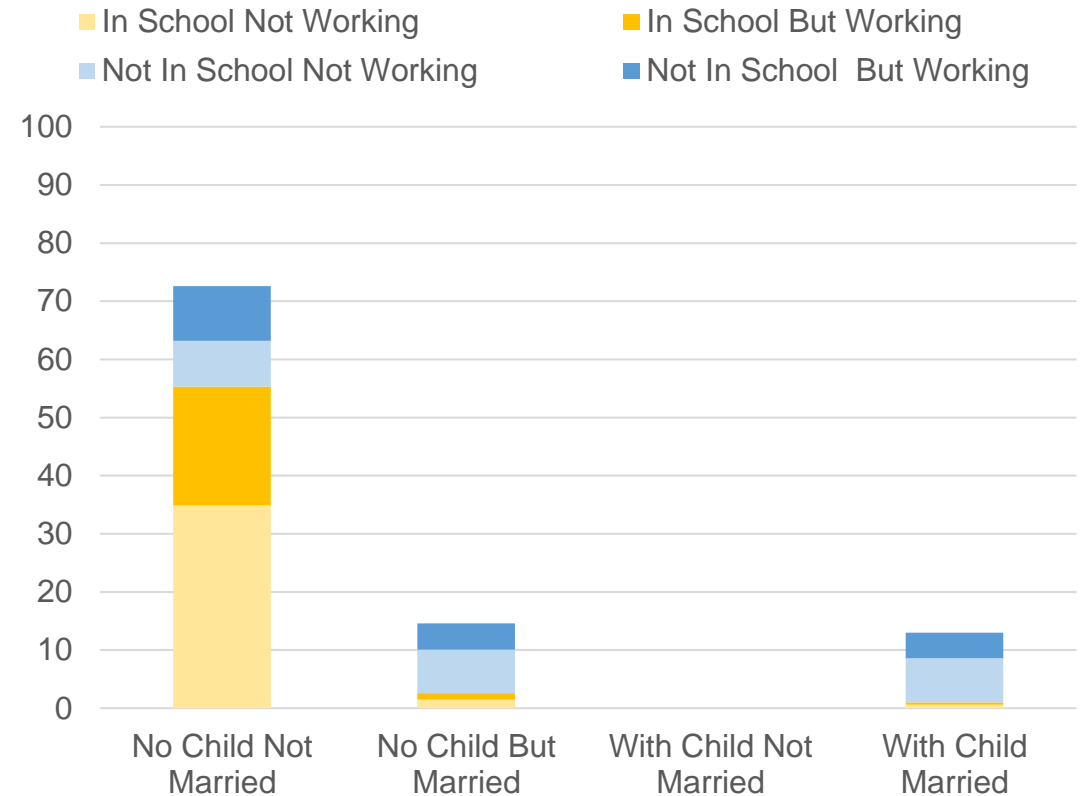
Comparisons with SAR countries

India



India = "Educator" (like South Africa/Namibia)

Nepal



Nepal = "Generalist" (like Uganda/Malawi)